X 774 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

X 774 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

X 774 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Tenqat (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jerusalem-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Čhängär. The archangels Mikaël and Gabriël, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Ṭemqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

● 971 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was ‹ Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[787] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

●771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 518 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahissa, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER XV

THE NATIONAL CHURCH & RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA

FEW institutions of a religious character could be more picturesque than the National Church of Abyssinia, but when that has been said little more can be advanced in its favour. It has been alleged by a recent visitor to the country that "Ethiopian Christianity is of a kind which Dean Stanley described as hardly capable of going lower without ceasing to be Christianity", and I am not prepared to quarrel with the statement.

Yet, such as it is, it is exceedingly rich and powerful and its influence is still very strong to-day; and great as is the part played by various forms of religious belief in shaping the destinies of many countries in the world, few I think can have affected a country's history as much as in Abyssinia.

There is little doubt but that that country owes the maintenance of its position of independence for so long largely to the fact that, one of the first of the peoples of Africa to embrace Christianity, it has maintained a form of that faith for nearly 1600 years. This fact added to the impregnable nature of its mountain fastnesses, and the warlike character of its people, has caused the country to be regarded somewhat differently to the bulk of the nations of Africa, and has contributed to its escape up till now from the fate of partition amongst European powers which has overtaken the rest of the continent.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

That the whole fabric of the original tenets of their Church is overlaid with a mass of gross superstition is unfortunately only too obvious; it is due, doubtless, to the vicissitudes through which the Church has passed, to the perpetual and invincible ignorance of the bulk of the priesthood, and to the composite nature of their Church tradition, consisting, as it does, of a pagan, Egyptian, Jewish, Coptic, and Latin evolution. That elements of all these forms of worship enter into their present-day religion cannot be doubted by those who have witnessed their ceremonies, examined their ecclesiastical robes and furniture, and studied their customs. And, indeed, it would be strange if it were not so, for this ancient people are themselves a combination of a number of different strains and races, drawn from both Asia and Africa, combining to form not only an interesting historical study, but a curious and baffling modern problem in the world of to-day, into which they have only comparatively recently emerged.

Originally pagan of course, the country adopted Judaism nearly 1000 B.C., and about the time of the birth of Christ the mythological beliefs of Greece appear to have been introduced, without, however, effecting the supersession of the Jewish faith.

It was in the early part of the fourth century (A.D. 330 is the generally accepted date) that the conversion of Ethiopia from Judaism to Christianity is reported to have been effected as the result of the visit to that country of some shipwrecked Christians. Being successful in converting the sovereign and the Court, they aspired to extend their sway over the whole country, and accordingly one of them returned to Egypt, obtained the assistance of the Alexandrian authorities, was

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

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771

nominated Bishop of Ethiopia, and induced the Abyssinian people to join the Alexandrian or Coptic branch of the Church.

According to Abyssinian tradition the first introduction of Christianity took place at an even earlier date. It is alleged that Matthew the Evangelist visited the northern districts of the country about A.D. 30 and attempted the conversion of the people; apparently, however, he made only few converts to the new doctrines and was eventually turned out. A further slight extension of the new faith is claimed to have been made a few years later; indeed Alvarez, writing in 1527, refers to Ethiopian books and traditions which describe Candace as the first Christian queen of the country and as having had her principal residence near Axum. Her conversion was alleged to have been due to a eunuch in her service who was sent by her to Jerusalem, and there met with Philip and was baptized by him as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. This would be about A.D. 34, or some three hundred years before the generally accepted date.

I do not propose to enter into the merits of this latter claim, nor even into the claim that Abyssinia became christianized by divine inspiration during Christ's childhood without the aid of any missionaries (!); nor is it my purpose to trace the history of the Church from its inception up to now. Suffice it to say that it has passed through many vicissitudes, and that for hundreds of years the Abyssinians had to fight for the maintenance of their religion against external and internal foes. The main attacks were the great Moslem invasion of 1528 which swept over the country and all but engulfed it, followed by the invasion of the pagan

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Galla, which came very near to being successful and which would in that event have resulted in blotting out Christianity in the country. And finally, the third attack on their particular form of Christianity, though not on Christianity itself, came from the Portuguese missionaries, who, arriving towards the middle of the sixteenth century, produced a good deal of effect on the religious life of the country. They actually succeeded in inducing one king to renounce the Alexandrian doctrine, to profess publicly his belief in Roman Catholicism, and to proclaim this faith as the national religion. But the success was short-lived; public opinion, bitterly outraged, would not tolerate the supersession of the old doctrines, and the king was compelled to restore the national faith by public proclamation. His son, who succeeded him shortly afterwards, completed the work by expelling the Jesuits.

In spite of these attacks the Abyssinians retain their faith unaltered to this day, though owing to their later conquests their rule extends over a larger number of non-Christian subjects than there are Abyssinians. The Somals, Danakil, and some of the Galla (in Harrar and Djimma) are Moslems; the Shankala and other Galla (in Boran, Arussi and Walega) are pagan, the latter believing in a form of supreme deity they call *Wak* or *Wakwe*, and a number of minor spirits or *Sarosh*. The Falasha are Jews.

Many of the Galla (in Wollo for example) were converted to Christianity by the Emperor Menelik, but his methods hardly seem to have been such as to inspire the converts with any profound or reasoned conviction of the merits of that faith. When he conquered a Galla country the inhabitants had to become Christians lest

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA (*continued*)

346 BRUCE wrote that there was no country in the world
•771 where there were so many churches, and I have seen an estimate which I should think was well under the mark —of 3000 for Shoa, 1100 for Gojam, and 2600 for the districts of Gondar and Axum. For even small villages have two or three churches each, and it is a popular axiom that he who has erected a church has atoned for every sin. And to each of this legion of churches are attached many priests who live in remarkably simple—to put it mildly—accommodation in the precincts.

346 The buildings themselves are quite unpretentious, being small circular erections built of the stone that abounds everywhere in the country, covered with pointed thatched roofs surmounted by a cross on the points of which ostrich eggs are generally impaled. The Abyssinians show a considerable measure of reverence
[788] to their churches, outwardly at all event. I have frequently seen men of importance stop their retinue when passing the church, dismount, and kiss the earth.

The principal modern church in Abyssinia is that of St. George, the patron saint of Abyssinia, at Addis Ababa. It is a stone-built edifice, octagonal in shape, surmounted by a large central dome; it is of no particular style of architecture, though it approximates to the Greek, and externally it is not very pleasing to

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

196 "Then they blessed a lot of long grass they had, and
527 gave it to us and we distributed it amongst the staff. Every servant there tied his piece of grass tightly round his head and wore it all day—they all seemed highly delighted."

• 111 But in spite of their strict observance of feasts and their pride in the fact of their being Christians, I cannot really think that they could in any sense of the word be described as a really religious people, their lives being in no way a reflection of their theoretical beliefs. Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous results. Thus they wear their charms and amulets suspended round their necks by a silken cord (never leather, which is used by Mohammedans for this purpose); they have a strong belief in the power of the "evil eye"; they will not look at a person eating, they will not start on journeys on certain days, and they believe that certain houses are inhabited by evil spirits and will not live in them.

181 We came across some curious examples of this latter superstition. Two important Abyssinian nobles had built in their grounds quite nice stone and mortar houses in the European style. These houses were lying empty, and their owners were living in native built *tukuls*, for the reason that their tame priests had told them that evil would befall them if they moved into their new residences.

Another and more serious example was that of a chief who was very ill with pneumonia. He was just getting over it when in the middle of one night his priest told him that he had had a vision to the effect that if he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ṣhafṣheṣē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibāṭchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[48]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

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flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

Gondar Today

A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāqudām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

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tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

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world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayḅ* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[1]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

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Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā* by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.

The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cultural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusionism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ǐnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

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Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

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ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot*, the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life.

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones.

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels.

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shĭllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor.

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience.

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So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

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the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced

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643 17 century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus [461] tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and emperors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 643 17 It is true, as Margery Perham ably sets forth, that a primitive state of technology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 643 17 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no 771 longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 643 17 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of certain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their

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the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[82] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[83] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the Crown.

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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

178 181 565 085

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but integrative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pursued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

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Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relationship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

instance, as contrasted with sentiments of mutuality and solidarity; in the second, as contrasted with a condition of numerous social obligations and constraints; in the third, as contrasted with anonymity and conformity. In so doing our attention will necessarily be directed to disparate orders of phenomena. The empirical referent of these three concepts of individualism will be studied as follows:

(1) *Egoism.*—The degree of individualistic disposition among the Amhara will be examined in terms of two measures: the extent to which individuals are attached to collective symbols and interests, and the extent to which interpersonal relations take non-solidaristic forms.

(2) *Independence.*—The degree of individualistic social organization will be examined with reference to the different institutional foci of Amhara life, and measured by the extent to which role definitions are permissive rather than prescriptive; the possibility of voluntary as opposed to compulsory associations; and the possibilities for the protection of individual rights.

(3) *Individuality.*—The degree of individuality will be measured by the extent to which originality and heroic excellence are valued in the media of self-development and self-expression customary in Amhara culture.

EGOISM VERSUS SOLIDARISM

Self and Community

To what extent are the Amhara bound to one another by a sense of community, and to what extent are their actions guided by a sense of identification with collective symbols and needs? One conspicuous area of such commitment lies in the realm of religious affiliation. The Amhara manifest a strong sense of solidarity with their coreligionists over against all those who do not wear a *mätab* and who have not been baptized. They are deeply attached to the several symbols of the church—the church building itself, the compound in which it is enclosed, the holy ark, and all representatives of ecclesiastical authority—and react to violations of the dignity and purity of their religious symbols as to a personal affront. On certain ceremonial occasions they march in procession around the church shouldering rifles and spears, indicating their determination to defend by force the integrity of their religious objects. In cases where church membership has been channeled along the lines of schismatic orders, the Amhara—particularly the monks—have defended their doctrines faithfully and have at times suffered martyrdom.

With respect to their territorial and linguistic groups, the Amhara seem similarly attached to their collective symbols, if with somewhat less passion than in the religious case. As we have seen, the Amhara has a keen sense of identification with his native locale, or *ägar*, and is readily disposed to defend it against all comers. The expression *yägarē lijj* ("child of my country" or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.)
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54.
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.